

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1012

As Passed House:
February 7, 2011

Title: An act relating to planning commissioner terms of office.

Brief Description: Authorizing four-year terms for planning commissioners.

Sponsors: Representatives Angel, Haler, Klippert, Fagan, Rolfes and Fitzgibbon.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 1/11/11, 1/18/11 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/7/11, 88-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides for four or six-year terms of office for appointed members of established planning commissions.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Takko, Chair; Tharinger, Vice Chair; Angel, Ranking Minority Member; Asay, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Fitzgibbon, Springer and Upthegrove.

Staff: Heather Emery (786-7136).

Background:

A city, town, or county may create a planning commission to provide its legislative authority with citizen review and recommendations on planning-related matters. While the local government entity has broad authority to define the role of its commission, such commissions often have two distinct functions. First, they may prepare and revise the community's comprehensive plan and local land use regulations, such as the zoning or subdivision code. Second, they may review development proposals, such as site plans and subdivisions, and make recommendations to the local governing body.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Commission membership falls into two categories: ex officio and appointive. Ex officio members are members by virtue of the public office they hold and may not comprise more than one-third of commission membership. Appointive members are appointed by the mayor or chair of the municipality and confirmed by the legislative body. A member's term in office depends on his or her category of membership and the longevity of the commission:

1. The terms of office for ex officio members correspond with their tenures in elected office.
2. The terms of office for the first appointive members to a newly-established commission range from one to six years, to provide for the expiration of the fewest possible terms in one year.
3. The terms of office for appointive members to established commissions are six years.

Summary of Bill:

A city, town, or county legislative authority may establish a four-year or a six-year term of office for appointive members of an established planning commission. Terms of office for the first appointive members to a newly-established planning commission will continue to range from one to six years.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill provides local jurisdictions with flexibility. In the interest of fairness, non-code cities should have the same ability as code cities to choose four-year terms for appointive members. A six-year term is lengthy and impedes recruiting efforts. A shorter term would provide a greater opportunity for citizen service and attract a wider variety of people willing to serve.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Angel, prime sponsor; Larry Coppola, City of Port Orchard; Dave Williams, Association of Washington Cities; and Jeanette McKague, Washington Realtors.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.